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THE MODERN PRODIGAL

A SERIES
OF PRACTICAL TALKS TO
YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY REV. LEN. G. BROUGHTON, M.D.

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THE MODERN PRODIGAL.

A Series of Practical Talks to Young People.

BY

REV. LEN. G. BROUGHTON, M. D.,

Pastor Tabernacle Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.
Author of "TALKS ON HOME,"
and other books.

"My son, attend unto my wisdom and bow thine ear to my understanding; that thou mayest regard discretion, and thy lips may keep knowledge." SOLOMON.

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PREFACE.

The eight chapters of this little book will, I trust, cause some young life to think seriously upon the danger-points along the way. Temptation, especially to the young, is hard to resist unless they are strongly fortified. Many a young life has gone down to ruin because of a lack of practical training concerning the dangers along life's journey. This book, therefore, is to aid in giving such training.

The hero in our study is the "prodigal son." His life is so full of warning that we have endeavored to reduce it to present-day experience, handling such evils as most likely contribute to the destruction of the young in our own time.

LEN. G. BROUGHTON.

To

YOUNG PEOPLE

This little volume is affectionately dedicated by
their friend and well-wisher,

The Author.

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The Young Man's Life;

OR,

MAKING MOST OF TIME.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG MAN'S LIFE;

OR,

MAKING MOST OF TIME.

It is astonishing what a boy can do when once he has made up his mind to do his best.

Not long after I entered the ministry, I went to a certain town to hold a series of meetings. It was one of these good old Southern towns, the inhabitants of which banked on aristocracy and fed their souls upon the glory of departed days. They had never known what it was to be spiritually warm. The first night I was there I preached to a great audience. It was in my early ministry, when I made many propositions. The first one I made that night was for any one to stand who wanted prayers offered for their friends. As soon as I made it a little boy got up and walked out in the aisle, where he stood looking me square in the face. I said, "God bless you, little man," and he sat down. I then asked any one who wanted the prayers of God's people to rise. That boy got out in the aisle again and looked me in the face, and again I said, "God bless you." I asked if there was anybody present who was willing to accept Jesus. That boy stood up again and looked me in the face, and again I said, "God bless

you." Nobody else stood up that night, and I began to think I had struck about the hardest and coldest crowd I had ever run up against.

The next night I preached as hard as I knew how to sinners, and when I finished, I asked anybody who wanted to be prayed for to stand up. That same little rascal popped out into the aisle as he had done the night before and stood looking at me till I saw him and said, "God bless you." I thought I'd vary the thing a little, so I asked if anybody present was willing to come forward and give me his hand as an indication that he would accept Jesus. That same boy came shuffling out of his seat, straight down the aisle and gave me his hand. I saw smiles on the faces of some in the congregation. Nobody but the boy showed any interest, and I went off somewhat disheartened. The third night I preached, and when I asked all who wanted prayer to rise, that boy popped out in the aisle. The people had begun to regard it as a joke, and they nudged each other with their elbows, while a broad smile flared from one side of the house to the other. When I asked anybody who was willing to accept Jesus to come and give me their hand, that boy came, and the congregation smiled broader than before, and some actually tittered. After the meeting the deacons came to me and told me that the boy must be stopped, as he was a half-idiot, and was throwing a damper on the meeting. I said: "Stop nothing! How are you going to throw a damper on an ice-house?"

For the whole of that week the boy was the only per-

son in the house who showed any interest in the meeting. Then he wanted to join the church. The pastor was absent, and I was to open the doors of the church. The deacons came to me and said I must not receive that boy, as he didn't have sense enough to join the church. I said: "Look here, brethren, I won't take this responsibility on my hands. I'm going to put that boy on you, and if you choose to reject him, his blood be upon your hands." At the conclusion of the morning service, I invited all who desired to unite with the church to come forward. That boy came. I asked him if he had accepted Christ for his personal Savior. That's all I ever ask. He said he had. "Brethren," said I, "you hear what this boy has to say. What will you do with him?" An ominous silence fell on the congregation. After a time, from way back by the door I heard a muffled and rather surly "I move he be received." Another painful silence followed, and then from the middle of the church I heard a muffled "I second the motion." When I put the motion, about half a dozen members voted "aye" in a tone so low that it seemed as if they were scared. I gave the boy the right hand of Christian welcome awaiting baptism, and then dismissed the congregation.

The next day the boy went out to see his old grandfather, a man whose whitened head was blossoming for the grave, and whose feet were taking hold upon the shifting sands of eternity. "Grandfather," said he, "won't you go to church with me to-night and hear that preacher?" We always feel kindly towards those who

are afflicted, you know, and are willing to please them; so the old man agreed to go.

That night I saw the boy and the old man sitting away back near the door. When the sermon was finished, one of the members of the church arose and said: "I have a request to make. We have with us to-night Mr. Blank, one of our oldest and most respected citizens, but he is out of Christ. I want special prayer offered for this my special friend." With that he laid his hand upon the head of the old man, down whose furrowed cheeks the tears were streaming. The next night I saw the old man sitting about half-way down the aisle. When all who wanted to accept Jesus were invited to come forward and give me their hand, I saw the half-idiot boy coming down the aisle leading the old man by the hand.

That little boy's father kept a saloon. The following day the child went there, and climbing up over the high counter, he peeped down upon his father and said: "Papa, won't you go to church with me to-night to hear that preacher?" "You get out of here, child, go out of here," said the father; "don't you know you musn't come in here?" Strange, strange, how fathers will keep places into which their children can not go.

"But, papa," continued the boy, "won't you go to church with me to-night?" "Yes, I'll go, but you get out of here."

That night the man came with the half-idiot boy and sat about where the old man had sat the night before. When I asked all who would accept Christ to come for-

ward, he walked down the aisle and gave me his hand. He asked if he could make a statement, and when I said "yes," he faced the congregation and said: "My friends, you all know me, and I want to say that so long as I live I will never sell another drop of whisky, for I have given my heart to God to-night, and from this day forward I propose to serve him." The meeting warmed up at last, the town was set on fire for God, every saloon-keeper was converted and every saloon in town was closed. The feeling spread and a saloon seven miles in the country was closed and the keeper was converted to God.

At the close of the meeting I sat on the front seat and saw the pastor lead three generations into the baptismal waters, the old man in front, his son behind him, and last in line the little half-idiot boy. The only mistake that was made, to my mind, was that the boy who had led the others to Christ should not have been first in the line. Where is the little half-idiot boy now? He has grown much brighter within the last few years and is now going to school. He says he wants to be and will be a missionary. Oh, my friends, my heart thrills within me to think that, off yonder in some dark continent, there are heathen souls who are waiting for the sound of the voice of that half-idiot boy to proclaim to them the glad things of salvation and to send a stream of light within their benighted lives.

What a lesson to the young to-day. Let us learn it. Persistent, self-surrender, *ever doing the best we can,* is a never-failing way that leads to victory.

THE YOUNG MAN AT HOME;

OR,

STARTING IN LIFE.

"And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."—Luke xv: 11, 12.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG MAN AT HOME;

OR,

STARTING IN LIFE.

There are many lessons to be learned from a careful study of the prodigal son—the fatherhood of God—the brotherhood of man—man's proneness to sin and stray away from God; the nature and consequences of sin—return to God a voluntary act, and God's willingness to forgive. These points will all consume a portion of our consideration as we proceed in the discussion which shall follow in the course of our series. We will consider him at

HIS HOME.

There is no questioning the fact that in the majority of instances a boy's home life marks his future conduct. But when I say "home life" I do not mean the amount of money in his home. Oh, we so often confound the word home with something material. A boy's home is not made up of money; it is not made up of houses and lands. A boy's home is something grander than these; it is something indestructible; it is that which will stand misfortunes and reverses; it is a moral and spiritual edifice. Well might the Italian sing—

"My home, my home is love;
There is nothing that can tell it."

There was a mighty truth spoken by a little waif on the streets of a certain city one morning as he met a handsomely-dressed gentleman, and began talking to him about his home. Said he: "Mister, I've got the finest home you ever seen, if I am in rags myself." "Your home?" said the man. "Yes, sir, my home." "Where is your home?" Just at that time he saw coming around the corner a poor old woman, with a bundle of clothes upon her head, and, pointing toward her, he said: "There it is, mister." Yes, many of us can appreciate his words. When I go to the city of Raleigh, N. C., I always want to visit my old home; but where do I go? Not to the old house. 'Tis true, there are many things which could interest me there: the old playground, where I used to sail kites and play marbles and jump the rope. But I don't go there to find my home —oh, no! I go over to beautiful green Oakwood, and I ramble around among the cedars and the marble slabs, till I come to a little mound beneath which lies the grandest mansion that was ever erected by hands divine—the spot where dear mother lies. So a boy's home does not consist of houses and lands, but a mother's love and a father's protecting care.

May we not, then, conclude that much of the failure on the part of our young men is due to false training in the home? May it not be that the reason why much of the good learned in life, in the school-room and church, is

lost because the home does not back up such lessons? Let me then appeal to you, fathers and mothers. Study well this matter. It is an awful mistake to make. Try to help me as I shall try to help your boys.

It is not always true, however, that a bad or unsuccessful boy has had bad training. Doubtless it was not true in the case of the prodigal. He may have had the very best. Some boys, it seems, are predestined to be bad, and no power seems to be able to prevent it. And it is no excuse for a young man that he was not trained properly, for boys become men, and men are to know right from wrong and to act for themselves.

What, in my judgment, causes so much failure on the part of young men is a false conception of life in the start.

First.—This is shown in a crazy disposition on their part to get away from home and home influences. This was true of the young prodigal. He was restless and unsettled; wanted to get away from home and home influences; could not stand the restraints of his father, the earnest pleadings of his mother. There was too much sameness about his life. He could see other young men having a good time in the world, and why not enjoy some of the fun?

THE MODERN PRODIGAL.

How much like him are many of our boys! I know what I am talking about; I've been a boy. The fact is, I have not long since left your present sphere. I am

going to talk plain to you, then, boys. Not that I delight in criticizing you, but to help you.

The modern prodigal—how numerous! He wants to get away from the old folks; get away from home. There are many reasons prompting him in his desire to flee from home. There is not as much liberty as he wants and, he thinks, as he deserves. He looks around him and sees that other boys have freedom. They are not tied to "mother's apron-string." They stay upon the streets day and night. They are not forced to come home and give an account as to where they have been. They don't have to go to church and hear a long sermon, or to attend Sunday-school. But with him it is the reverse. He has to go to church and Sunday-school; cannot be allowed late hours upon the streets; somebody is always watching him, and he concludes that he can't stand it.

Besides, there is too much restraint upon his bodily indulgences. He opens his big Solomon eyes and sees no harm in this and that thing. There is, to him, no harm in visiting the opera and looking hours upon half-dressed men and women. Oh, no; that's not any harm! Mother and father objects, but that is "old folks' fogishness." There is, to him, not the slightest harm in dancing the german. Oh, no; it gives grace to one's carriage. No harm at all in clasping his arms around the waist of a young lady, provided it is in a ballroom. True, mother and father tell him that it is, but a breeze which fans many times into a flame animal passion to such an extent that ruin is the inevitable

consequence. But that is "old folks' fogishness." He sees no harm in playing a game of cards, for fun, in the parlor with a young lady; certainly not; it passes away the time so pleasantly. The "old folks" say its wrong. They say it may lead to ruin, but they don't know; we boys are presumed to know some things. And then occasionally he wants to smoke a cigarette. The cigarette, as you know, is a necessary concomitant of the dude, and he sees no harm in it; other boys do it; it don't hurt them. On the other hand, it looks nice and "sporty" for a boy to smoke gracefully a cigarette. 'Tis true again, mother and father and the family doctor tell him that one great cause for the rapid spread of consumption today is the inhalation of the hot, poisonous fumes of the cigarette.

A SAD DEATH SCENE.

Ah, young men, hear me upon this point. Many a young man today in this city is a wreck, mentally and physically, because of this awful habit. I shall never forget a death scene I witnessed once. It was caused by cigarettes. He was a bright young man and had a good future. He formed the habit of smoking cigarettes, and, like all of the others, he inhaled the smoke. He continued this for several years. His lungs were not strong. After awhile, a cough developed. A physician was called. His lung tissue was beginning to give way. His eyes were swollen from the arsenic in which the paper was bleached. The doctor told

him to quit, but he could not; it had gone too far. Like a man chained to a post, he was chained fast to this mighty evil. Finally, he gave up, and I shall never forget his confession on his deathbed. Said he: "Doctor, I am a murderer; I have taken my own life, and am afraid I cannot get pardon." Oh, young men, this is a mighty evil. I wish I could impress you with it as it is. I beg you, young man, as one who knows its dangers, lay down that death-germ you hold in your hand. Flee from it, or it will be your ruin. Great God, help them as they try to let the habit go, and speed the day when those who deal in them, from the seller to the manufacturer, shall be branded as highway murderers. Liberty! Liberty! Oh, what of its fruits! Go into our big cities today. Let me show you those great institutions, with rooms filled with young men; the vile, slimy germs of death eating out their lives. Take care, young men, lest as you plunge into what you call fun and innocent pleasure you do not pay its awful penalty. Take care that, as you hunt for liberty, you do not find a prison.

THE CURSE OF THE DAY.

Second.—This false conception of life is seen in the extravagant manner in which young men spend what they get.

It has been said, extravagance is the curse of the age. I believe it is true. Largely what a young man is by twenty-five at least he is for life.

Edison was famous for his inventions when twenty-three.

Bacon was a member of Parliament at twenty-three; at twenty-six, one of its leaders.

Hayne, when twenty-two, had the best paying law practice in South Carolina.

Poe was a poet at sixteen; at twenty-four he wrote "The Raven."

Bryant wrote poetry at nine; at eighteen, his masterpiece, "Thanatopsis," was published.

Choate entered college at sixteen; began practicing law at twenty-four.

Longfellow's first poetry was published at thirteen.

Shakespeare left school at fourteen; Clay at fourteen; John Bright at fifteen.

Scott entered the fair realm of literature at twenty-five.

Byron's first poems appeared at nineteen; at twenty-four, he reached the highest pinnacle of his literary fame.

Wilberforce entered Parliament at twenty-one.

William of Orange commanded the army on the French frontier at twenty-two.

Napoleon, at twenty-seven, commanded the army in Italy.

Hamilton began his public career at seventeen; at twenty-seven, was one of the best-known lawyers and statesmen of his day.

So I say a young man's habits are usually pretty well established by the time he is twenty-five. If then he

should be extravagant till that age, he may expect to be extravagant for life.

I believe this is the solution of the hard-times problem. Probably no such times have ever been experienced as the present. Many theories have been advanced as to its cause. Bad legislation on the part of State and nation has been accused. It may be, and doubtless is, partly responsible. Good legislation may tend to remedy things. But as I see it, extravagance is the fundamental cause for all our trouble along this line. Extravagance in the individual and in the nation. More money going out than is coming in. Young men share their part of the blame. A young man today thinks that about the highest achievement in life is to so live as to gain for himself, by his money or otherwise, the title of "society man." It makes no special difference what it cost. Girls are largely responsible for such a sad state of society. Only the other day at a very prominent watering place in our State I overheard two young ladies talking about a certain young man who lived in their town. One of the girls remarked, "Oh, he is awful nice; no better boy in town; prominent in church; a thorough business boy; saves his money, and, in fact, he's perfection. But you know we girls can't associate with him in company because he's not a 'society boy.'" What did she mean? She meant that he didn't throw his money away buying spike-tail coats and big-leg trousers; that he did not visit the german, the opera, the card table and the saloon. Yes, it meant that he was a man, and,

as such, possessed enough sense to know the pitfalls in the way of the young man. Society! Oh, the folly of such a thing! How it has ruined our boys! And it is in order to appease the cry of foolish, flippant girls that they are led into such life; caused to spend their time and money in reckless extravagance, until by the time they are old enough to settle down in life they have neither health nor wealth. There is many a boy in our city who is being led on and on to ruin by this false idea of life. There is a young man here who came from another city. At home, he was a good boy; prominent in church and in business; never thought of being a dude. But when he came to the city he fell in with the wrong crowd. He was led off by the society element of the city; and today he is a physical, financial and moral wreck. God pity any boy who falls in with that crowd. In another city I had a playmate and friend. He was thought well of by the town. He was a very prominent young man in church; had a good, Godly mother. This boy went to another State, received a good salary, but unfortunately fell in with the wrong crowd. He began the sporting life. Step by step he went downward, all the time getting a faster grip upon society, until after awhile he came to himself, saw his condition, saw an overdrawn account which he could not meet. He skipped for the West, but he was caught, and tonight he is serving a term of five years in the Virginia State prison. Oh, boys, think upon these things; they are no "tales;" they are facts. You do not think they will be your end, but it is well for you

to watch. You are not safe so long as you are in this road. When I was in a Western city the people were very much alarmed one morning at the news of "no water." The reservoir was practically dry. What was the matter? Why, a secret leak had sprung in its base, and though supplied by the Ohio river, yet, because of the leak, it was insufficient. So, young man, you may convert your business into a regular flowing Pactolus, ever depositing its golden sands into your coffers, yet through numerous wastes of unfrugal habits you may live embarrassed and die in want.

A FALSE CLAIM.

Third.—This false idea of life is seen in the exhibition of their impudent dependence. It was so with the prodigal. Hear his demands; see his consummate impudence: "Father"—it is a wonder he said father; most of our young men would not have had so much respect for him; they would have said "old man"—"give me my goods, the portion belonging to me." Impudence personified. He had no goods. What had he done to have a claim upon his father's goods? Why, that father ought to have taken him off, given him a good "flogging" and then put him to work. That's the goods he needed. There is too much sponging upon the hard earnings of the old fathers. I know healthy young men who "dude" around our streets all the week, spin yarns, fight cocks, "root" for baseballers, play cards and read novels, and think nothing of

going to their old fathers Saturday nights and demanding "spending change." Some of them depend upon poor, hard-working mothers for all they get. And yet "society" does not frown them down. They are given high seats in the society of "Sons of Rest," and the public applaud. Oh, when will these things change? When will society be purged?

THE FAMILY WAGON.

The other day I was going down the street, and saw a wagon stalded; it was loaded with wood. Hitched to it was an old, poor, flap-eared mule, looking like he was on his way to the bone-yard more than anywhere else. On this wagon were two strong, broad-shouldered young men. I watched them for awhile. "Get up! Get up!" they shouted. "What's you here fur?" And then bang! bang! came the lash. "Get up! Get up! Get up! What's you here fur?" The temptation was too strong. I said: "Boys, get down and give him a lift." "None of your business," they said. And I went on. Now, I think I've seen some family wagons like this. A poor, old father is hitched. He pulls his best, and can just manage to get along. Two or three great strapping boys, who ought themselves to do the pulling, are always on the wagon. They whip and they slash when things get stalded, but never think to put their own shoulders to the wheel and help carry the load. Oh, young men, be ashamed to sponge upon your old fathers!

THE REAL END OF LIFE.

Finally, young men, let me impress you with the real end of life at the start: it is the glory of God and the good of your fellow-men. All other objects fade away. Pleasure is but for a season. Money must perish, but service to God grows brighter and brighter as the years go by. Oh, that you could learn this lesson; learn it while under the home-roof, while starting in life. This is the period of most importance to you. Much depends upon it. A vessel was coming across the waters. A young man was aboard; buckled around him was a wreath of precious treasures he had gathered on his journeys. During the last night of his journey, the boiler of the vessel exploded; their ship, consequently, was sinking. The passengers began leaping, with their life-preservers, out into the angry sea. Just as he was preparing to leap, a little girl came up and said: "Mister, won't you save me?" He thought a moment, pulled off his treasures, threw them upon the deck, threw his arms around her, and leaped for their lives. The great waves came and rolled them ashore, when friends and loved ones shouted and leaped for joy. Young men, such is your case. You are on a sinking vessel. The period of youth is slipping away. Stretched out before you is the sea of life. There are two great powers claiming your attention—the power of pleasure and wealth and the power and weight of eternity. Your soul is pleading for salvation

from the threatening waves of sin. You must decide this matter. Oh, heed the pleadings of your soul! Unbuckle the wreath of pleasure from around you. Buckle on the life-preserver—Jesus Christ. Throw around your soul the strong arm of resolute protection and leap out in life. And then, though the storms may come, yet in the end you will land safely on the other shore, where loved ones will meet and greet you. Angels will rejoice, and, above all, God will crown you with immortal glory and honor.

The Young Man in the World;

OR,

WANDERING IN SIN.

"And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living."—Luke xv: 13.

CHAPTER III.

THE YOUNG MAN IN THE WORLD;

OR,

WANDERING IN SIN.

In our last we left our young hero starting in life. The ship of youth and young manhood was being launched. At present we take him out on life's proud ocean, battling with the breakers. We watch him as he sails.

Unfortunately for poor, sin-depraved man, this life is so crowded with sin that go where you will and you are confronted with its tempting hand. And man being by nature a creature of sin, in his unregenerate state cannot help engaging in its folly. Molded in a mold which fits nothing but sin, he would not help it if he could. Regeneration, fortunately for him, breaks up and destroys this sin-mold—recasts it in the foundry of God's love and infinite mercy, so that it henceforth is suited to truth and righteousness.

Now, with this unchanged heart and life, our young man of tonight ventured out in life. It was a very unwise and dangerous step to make, for upon life's sea there are so many breakers, so many storm clouds to encounter, that no one is safe who is not prepared to

fasten his anchor beneath the immovable rock Christ Jesus.

But his launching was from the standpoint of the "good-time hunter," grand and glorious. I have seen a proud ship just entering for a trip across the sea. She had a bright prospect. Her rigging was in handsome trim. Her timbers were stout and strong. Her flag was flapping in the gentle summer breezes. Her sails were new and bright. Her keel had never experienced a single storm. Her captain strutted with arrogant pride. O, how grandly, how proudly she split the rolling waves and hurled them up on either side like mountain ranges in the far-off distance. But times were not always so hopeful. She encountered a storm. Her strong timbers reeled and cracked. Her sails split in fragments. Her captain grew sick and heartless, and finally after a hard-fought night succeeded in pulling his vessel into an unfriendly shore, wrecked and ruined.

This was our young prodigal. It was all smiles that morning when he proudly stepped out from the old home and entered upon life for himself. The sky of hope was never so clear to him. The sun of promise never shone so brightly. He had his money with which he was going to have a good time. He had his freedom which he had so long craved. To him this was a grand start, an envious beginning. But alas! how sad the end! Soon the storm of temptation and sin is raging. He is being swayed to and fro. Like the handsome rigging upon the proud vessel, his

youthful expectations are split in tatters. The gaily-rigged boat of self-security and self-appreciation is shattered into fragments of ruin, and he lies upon the shores of life wrecked and ruined forever.

THREE CAUSES.

Now, there are three causes which operate upon his life just at this point which we must consider.

First.—As was mentioned in our last, he had an improper conception of the value of money.

To him money was intended simply to give a man a gay time. This was evidenced by the fact that he spent his substance in riotous living. Alas! Alas! It is too true to say that many of our young men regard money as having no higher value than a gay time. Two young men come to the city from the same community; they obtained good positions; they received the same salaries; they roomed together. One of them decided to lay by a certain portion of his money every month; the other strayed off after "a good time"—that fiend which has destroyed so many noble young men. He frequently laughed at his roommate for his stinginess. But it was not long before his stingy bed-fellow had a nice little home with a pretty little wife, and was as happy as he could be; while the "society dude" was a professional dead beat, and no man cared for him. Money, as we have already seen, is only valued for the good it can do. Do not forget this, it may help you some day.

BAD COMPANIONS.

Second.—The wrong kind of companions. There is no doubt when he started out with money in his pocket and a free heart, and began to spend his money, he was at once surrounded by a gang of professional dead beats and bums. There are always just such old sports to take in a young fellow who knows little about the ways of the world. Not long ago I was called to the police headquarters on Monday morning. I was told that there was a young man there from Lynchburg who wanted to see me. I went inside the jail and found an innocent-looking young fellow. He was crying. I soon saw he was a novice in that business. I was told by an officer the story. He had left home and come to our city on Saturday afternoon to accept a position which had been tendered him. He had a few dollars given him by his widowed mother. Upon arriving he fell in with the wrong crowd. They found he had a little money. They led him into a dram shop, and from the dram shop into still worse dives, and then he was robbed. A fight and an arrest told the story. I arranged to get him out, and shall never forget his parting words: "I'm going home to my mammy." Boys, everything depends upon your early associates. O, that you could be made to feel it as I know it. Mr. Beecher tells of a large tree in his father's yard. It had stood there for years. Finally they noticed a very peculiar vine growing around it. But they paid little

attention to it, as it grew very slowly. But after some years the tree died, and they dug up the old stump, and to their great astonishment they found that this old vine had so entwined itself around the roots of the old tree as to cut off circulation, and death was inevitable. So, my young friends, with evil associations. They may be ever so flattering in their outward expressions, but beneath the surface they are constantly reaching forth to destroy you. Beware of them as you would the Python. In going into any community always look out for the best. Not best in the sense most people regard best. A great many think the term best refers to the old Colonels, the Captains, the Majors and what little remains of the old blooded animals who once lived. Some people are so reckless in the use of the term "best" as to make it apply to the little withered crop of dudes, dudines and dudlets that remains. A lady some time ago said to me, "the best people dance." I said, "beg your pardon; Who are they?" And when she had named them she had called over a list of "would-be's"—a list of old fops and old maids, with now and then a very good couple. But they'll have to quit, or they'll be just like the others. Certainly the girl will be an old maid. It was never known to fail. That's the way to make them. If I had a daughter, and wanted to make a first-class old maid out of her, I'd put her out on the ball-room floor and let every spike-tail snob in town put his arms around her, and I'd be gratified. No, don't hunt for that kind of "best." Hunt for the young men who are moral; who don't

drink, play cards nor dance, but who go to church and Sunday-school and spend their idle hours at home. And thus selecting your companions, you'll have no trouble with them.

THE NATURE OF SIN.

Third.—Again, the greatest trouble with young people is to get them to have a proper conception of the nature of sin. What is sin? God's word gives us but one definition of sin: "Sin is the transgression of the law." The law of God is the life of the soul; therefore sin is the destroyer of soul-life. The best definition outside of that given in the Bible is given by Mr. Spurgeon. He says sin is a cancer which eats up and destroys the soul's prospect for immortal glory, and wrecks and ruins it for life. This is awful, if true, and I think by following the analogy a little way we shall see it to be true.

First.—In its insidiousness. Dr. D. Hays Agnew, than whom there has not lived upon this continent, in my judgment, a greater surgeon, says, in speaking of insidious diseases: "Of all the insidious diseases known to man, this we call cancer is the worst. We never know how, when or where it is going to make its attack upon the body. Whether in some of the less hurtful ways, upon the surface, and submit for treatment, or whether in its ravaging thirst for human life, it will lay its dirty hand upon some internal organ and prove death." To those who have had any experience

along this line, these words are recognized as the words of a wise man. The man who has in his blood the germ of cancer may never feel secure. Sooner or later it will assert itself upon him.

But not more insidious in its attack upon the physical man is the germ of cancer, than is the germ of sin to the spiritual man. Beginning as it does as but a small floating organism, so to speak, it courses itself through the various avenues of life in search for the proper time and place, and when it has found them it sends its dirty, slimy roots and rootlets into the vital principle of life, and soon claims its victim.

PETER DEGRAAF, THE CONDEMNED CRIMINAL.

O, the insidiousness of sin! How it undermines and destroys bright hopes and good prospects! How it steals the innocent babe from its mother's breast, leads him on through the years of his development, promising bright things, but in the end placing him upon the hangman's gallows!

When I lived in the city of Winston, N. C., a young white man of twenty-one was convicted of the murder of a young white woman. His name was Peter Degraaf. Great interest was manifested concerning the trial. I was his spiritual adviser. Just before his execution he said: "Tell every young man to let whiskey, pistols and bad women alone." "Once," he continued, "I was innocent, but gradually I was led astray until now what a spectacle!" Young man, take warn-

ing. This is a mighty enemy with which you are contending.

But you say, "it will never get me." O, no, certainly not. Whoever thought that it would master them? Did you ever know of one who expected it to be their ruin? "Never get me." Ah! young man, you don't know your doom. I know it is all smiles now; but listen: the day will not always be so bright. The sky will not always be so clear. The germ of sin will show itself and you its fruits must reap. Sampson, when he fondly lay his head in the lap of Delilah, never dreamed of its consequences. David, when he first looked upon the beautiful form of the wife of Uriah, never thought that it would lead on and on until he became an adulterer and a murderer; and yet David had much more power of resistance than you have tonight.

NO DANGER, NO DANGER.

But you say, "no danger, no danger in me." You are told about these things, but they make no impression upon you. There is "no danger" to you. Your bold self-satisfaction and determination remind me of an incident which occurred in a London theatre. A snake-charmer gave an exhibition. He had the stage decked with flowers and shrubbery till it resembled a flower garden. In this garden was a large anaconda snake, with which the performer would play as if it were a frolicsome, harmless kitten. He would appear on the stage, and when the applause that greeted him

had ceased, he would tell the people not to be uneasy, as the snake was tame, so that there was no danger in handling it. At one of these exhibitions the anaconda tried to entwine itself around its keeper's body. With a mighty effort the keeper succeeded in unwinding the coils of the serpent and dashed it to the floor. Some of the spectators begged him to cease—implored him not to fondle with the dangerous monster; but he told them only to be quiet—that there was no danger, and that those weak-kneed, chicken-hearted people who were always afraid should shut up or leave the building.

At that point the snake raised its head again, though its tail was motionless. The performer returned to it; but as he did so the huge monster suddenly began to entwine itself around the man's body. The performer again attempted to free himself, shouting, meanwhile, "keep quiet, keep quiet, there is no danger—no danger whatever!" But hardly had the words escaped his lips ere another sound was heard—a loud, wild, horrible cry of pain, succeeded by the noise of cracking bones and the weird death-rattle of the strangling victim of his own temerity.

Oh! young men, go on if you will in the enjoyment of the so-called pleasures of sin. You will feel its cold and merciless coils some of these days fastening themselves around you. It will be too late, then, to throw off those evil habits which you have been forming all through the passing years.

Second.—In its loathsomeness. Not only is sin like

unto cancer in the insidious manner of its attack, but also in the exceeding loathsomeness of its nature. The other day I visited a poor woman suffering with a facial cancer. What a pitiable sight to behold! I shall not attempt to describe it—I would not if I could. I have too much regard for your sensitive nerves. In agony of pain she was awaiting her final summons. I have also visited the great cancer hospital of New York city, the greatest institution of its kind in the world. Hundreds of poor sufferers are there, and despite the great care taken with them, yet the strongest-nerved man, as he stands there and beholds them, will quiver and shake. But this thing in us we call sin is none the less loathsome in its nature than is this disease. Can you imagine a sight more to be shunned than that of a young man who has been overcome by sinful habits to the extent that he has lost his manhood and now lives in the gutters, in the dens of infamy or in the prisons? "Don't go near him for the world" was said the other day by a good mother to her little boy who came in and told her of a young man who had staggered up the steps and was asking for a piece of bread. What was the matter? Ah, the poor boy was loathsome. He had come out of a good home, had a godly father and mother, had at one time a good prospect for life; but he had fallen in with a bad crowd and had contracted the habit of drink until now he was a walking devil. Mothers are afraid to trust their children in his presence while he eats a morsel of bread.

SOCIAL ROTTENNESS.

And it makes no difference at all how well you carry yourself in what is known as society. You may move in the very highest circles so-called. Your persons may be adorned with the most costly apparel. Indeed you may be the leader in all the social events in your sphere, yet with the germ of sin unatoned for by Christ, you are a man of putrefaction and decay. And all that is needed to bring to light this sad fact is time and opportunity. Only a few months ago a passenger train with several passengers went down into a broad, deep stream out West. An investigation was held and the cause was found to exist in the construction of the beam. During its molding a bit of air by some means found its way into the centre of the shaft, and a cavity was the result. The outside looked well. No sign of a flaw was observed, but finally, when under the pressure of a heavy burden it asserted itself, the shaft gave away and the great bridge with a mighty crash came to the ground. So are hidden flaws in the beam of life. That character, young man, may be put off upon the public as sound for a while. You may polish the outside. You may run upon family history and blood. But let me impress you with this truth: All that you need to be a wreck is the proper kind of opportunity. That faulty spot, that unpardoned sin in your heart, will assert itself sooner or later. O, young men, be wise; wait not for the test. Flee from sin.

ITS DESTRUCTION TO LIFE.

Third.—Sin is like the cancer in its destruction to soul life. Thus far we have been considering sin largely with reference to its blightening effects in this life. We have seen its insidiousness, its loathsomeness, and now we come to deal with the most important point in our study—its destruction to soul life. It would be bad enough if sin in its greed only touched this life—bad enough if it only robbed us of our bright prospects and our social position; but it will not, it cannot stop there. Like the insect that begins at the outside of the tree and is not content until he has penetrated the heart, or the panther, not content with simply mutilating and destroying the body, but must, in his thirst for human blood, go deeper and cut out the heart, the fountain of life, so is sin. It is not content with destroying life, but must go further and fasten its mighty, iron grasp upon the heart-centre of life and eat up and destroy its prospects for immortal glory.

LOST! LOST!!

O, that I could fire you with this thought tonight—the final culmination of all sin, when it must end at last. Will you listen to me tonight, unsaved men? Wanderer in sin, will you not stop in your heedless march and let ring in your ears for a moment the significance of this truth?

Some years ago a man was benighted in a mining

region. He lost his way. The darkness was dense, the dangers were thick. The next step might precipitate him down some awful shaft, some gloomy pit, and dash him bruised and shapeless upon its floor. He knew his peril, and he stopped, stood still, and began to cry, "Lost! lost !! lost!!!" A cottager heard the sound, and, grasping a lantern, hurried forth to answer the cry, "Lost! lost !! lost!!!" The lost man saw in the distance the glimmer of his light; it came nearer until, as its rays flashed through the surrounding mist, he found that he stood upon the very verge of death itself! Another step would have plunged him down a tremendous shaft a crushed and mangled corpse! One step! one step!! O, think of it! so close to death and eternity! Young men, you are lost tonight, wandering about in sin. O, for some divine light to come into our midst and shine away the mist and show you the possible danger which lies out before you. Stop! stop!! See the awful pit out of whose mouth comes the groans of agony of the lost souls of hell. Stop in your wanderings lest another step will plunge you in despair. O, see the light which God has given you through Jesus the Son. Come unto him and be saved tonight.

IN THE GUTTER;

OR,

OVERCOME WITH EVIL.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want."—Luke xv: 14.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?"—Luke xv: 17.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GUTTER;

OR,

OVERCOME WITH EVIL.

Things have wonderfully changed in the experience of our young man. In our last, we saw him "out in the world," having a gay time. He was sowing wild oats. He had plenty of money and plenty of friends, who voted him the finest fellow in town. But now what a change! You remember, we made a prediction concerning him; that he'd come to want if he continued in that course. No such a fast life can last. It would break a Vanderbilt in time. And yet many young men seem to think it is all right. I made a prediction some time ago to a member of my church in this city concerning a young man whose career I have been watching. He was known as the city dude. Drove his tandem team, and had his valet to accompany him when possible. I have felt sorry for him, for I am sure that that boy, unless he changes his manner of spending his father's money, will ere long be "in the gutter" begging bread. I don't know what he wants those horses for, unless it is to pull the water on his brain. It is strange to me that fathers will allow such a thing. It seems to me that they might know that it would

lead a boy to nothing. But it seems that somehow parents are often blinded to the faults of their own children.

So our young hero is only fulfilling prophesy. It's a sad picture! It's always sad to see a promising boy come to nothing. It means so much. The further hope of this country is in her young men. They are going to occupy the places of trust soon. They will manage the affairs of State. They will preach the gospel and control the world. What a pity then to see even a small per cent. of them come to naught!

IN THE GUTTER.

Let us see in what particular our young man was in the gutter.

First.—Financially.—It has not been long since he started with plenty of money. I do not know how much. I should say a sufficiency at least. It makes little difference about the amount, for it was all he had. It is not the amount of money a young man has when he starts. It is not what he makes; it is the way in which he uses what he gets. There are young men in this city getting along better on $30 a month than others getting $100. Why? Because they are taking care of what they get.

The prodigal spent his money in riotous living, and was in want. Boys, how many of you are doing the same thing? A young man today can't afford to wear a "ready-made" suit of clothes. He must go to the

best tailor and wear the best he can get and pay the best price for it. He can't walk with his girl to the opera; he must get a carriage and drive. A great rivalry seems to exist in the extravagance business, and the young man who can do the biggest fool piece of extravagance is for the time the popular fellow.

Young men, stop and think. There is coming a rainy day. You may not now see even the slightest cloud in your sky, but it will come, and you will rue the days of your folly.

WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE DONE.

In order that we may be impressed with his present sad surroundings, let us pause long enough to see what he might have done with his money.

First.—He might have educated himself. Many a boy would have jumped at his chance for an education. Oh, the boys today longing for an education! Some of them so anxious that they risk everything to obtain it. When I was a student at Wake Forest College, North Carolina, I remember a young man who came there with everything in the world he had on his back. He didn't have any encouragement save from the faculty of that noble institution, who have always stood for the poor boys. He battled against every obstacle imaginable, but finally came out conquerer, and today is occupying one of the most prominent posts of duty to be obtained. How easy for a young man with money to equip himself in this way! Young men, put

a peg here, if you come into the possession of money, either by your own labor or by inheritance, and have not a liberal education; stop everything and go to school and fit yourself for the real pleasures of life. This will be wealth which cannot be destroyed.

Again, he might have invested his money in some good business, and thus have saved himself this shame and disgrace. I wish I could impress upon young men the importance of saving and wisely investing their money. There are enough young men here in Roanoke, getting good salaries, if they would only take care of them, to start two or three good cotton factories in our city, which would not only bring them in good returns, but bless the entire community. But instead of this, it all goes in "riotous living." But suppose a young man can find no good business in which to invest his earnings? Then I would bury it. I have a thousand times more respect for the man who hides his money than for the man who throws it away in "riotous living." I heard of a man during the war who buried his money and afterwards forgot where he put it. Everybody laughed at him; but it was a thousand times better for that man's sons than if they had taken it and done as most others did—spent it in fast living. It is an awful, dangerous thing for some boys to come in possession of wealth. It generally means death to their future prospects.

But if he had no other way to have spent his money he could have put it in some good charitable cause, and thus have reaped perhaps the largest possible dividend.

The true object of life, as has been said, is the good of our fellow-man and the glory of God. No man will ever make a mistake who invests in this cause. Money spent here is never lost. "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." This is the promise of the Master. It is His principle of business. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." I wish so much every young man could appreciate this motto text. No man who has ever made it the rule of his life has ever come to want. The inexhaustible storehouse of God is behind Him. He cannot fail.

SOCIALLY DOWN.

Second.—But he was down socially and morally.

It would have been bad enough for him to have been in the gutter financially, but when he has added to his financial want his social and moral depravity, it is too great a pity.

Think of this contrast: a proud young heir, now eating with the hogs. Once the finest dressed man in town, now in rags. Once popular with boys and girls, now snubbed by them all. What a mighty change in so short a time.

Young man, you can afford to lose your money, but let me tell you, you can't afford to lose your character.

When that is gone, you are gone. But this is only the sad story of many a boy within the range of my acquaintance. They have been warned and warned, but they go on in their wild extravagant career. You may go on. You may smile at the prophesy, but unless there is a change in the manner of some of your conduct, you will ere long be lost in the deep sea of degradation and ruin.

But you say, "Who in our midst is wasting his substance in riotous living; we are not such a set of low, degraded fellows as your picture represents us?" Well, now, let us see. Riotous does not necessarily mean that a man is to fight and curse and drink whiskey. A fellow may be very riotous in his manner of living, and yet be quiet about it. Recently, I submitted a series of questions to ten of our leading business men, without regard to church or religious opinions. These questions were asked of them purely as business men. The circular sent out was as follows:

"IN THE INTEREST OF YOUNG MEN.

"Mr. ———

"Dear Sir: As perhaps you know, I am now delivering a series of practical talks to young men, with the view of guarding them and strengthening them against certain regarded dangerous points in life; and in order that I may be as plain and helpful as possible, I find it necessary to address a few questions to you, as a business man in Roanoke, which I trust you will consider, and in as condensed a manner as possible give me

your candid opinion. I assure you that your opinion, however much it may differ from mine, will by no means be a subject of criticism and discussion. I trust that in your answer you will be as frank and open as the nature of the case demands, and that you will have no hesitation whatever in speaking your sentiment. If you desire it, your name will be kept as a secret; however, it might be better to give with your opinion the weight of your influence to help in the furtherance of your sentiment.

"Please answer the following questions as early as possible, and return to me, No. 356 Campbell avenue:

"Question One—When, in your judgment, is a young man's most dangerous age?

"Question Two—What are some of the most dangerous points which at this time the young man has to pass?

"Question Three—What would constitute the very best recommendation for a young man to present to you for employment?

"Question Four—What influence would the knowledge that a young man was given to an occasional use of spiritous liquors have upon you in desiring his services?

"Question Five—What effect would it have upon you to know that a young man seeking employment under you—a position of trust—was habitually guilty of—

"First, playing cards.

"Second, attending germans.

Third, baseball (professional).

"Fourth, social clubs.

"Fifth, theatres (indiscriminate).

"Question Six—Please give me, as near as possible, your estimate of what it takes to constitute a model young man in business."

After I had obtained the answers to these questions, I tabulated them according to their agreement, and I give you the results. All agree in substance that from sixteen to twenty-five is the danger period. All agree that dissipation, fondness for games, card-playing, the wine cup, staying from home at night, bad books and evil associates are the greatest dangers. All agree, also, in substance that the best recommendation a young man can produce is a sober, honest, Christian character. In answer to question four, "What influence would it have upon you to know that a young man desiring a position of trust with you was habitually guilty of—

1. Taking a social glass of wine. All answer: "Would not have him."

2. Attending germans. Seven out of ten say: "Would not want him." Three say: "Would investigate further."

3. Attending professional baseball. Nine out of ten say: "Would not want him—takes time, and likely to lead astray." One says: "Would look into his other qualities."

4. Attending promiscuous theatres. Nine out of

ten say: "Would rather not have him—a dangerous habit."

5. Social clubs. Eight out of ten say: "Would not want him." The others say: "It would depend some upon the nature of the club." One of the eight said in his answer: "I regard the meanest thing the devil ever made is whiskey; next to this is a social club."

6. Card-playing. All answer: "Would not have him."

Now, as I said, these answers came from men who answered from strictly business standpoints, and they represent bankers, merchants and railroad men.

So, young men, the kind of rioting I am after in this talk is that which is engaged in by perhaps most of our young men. There is a craze for amusements and sports. Our people are going wild over them. There must be a stop to it. Business men are not going to stand it. I beg you then listen to them, as they speak from experience, many of them, and warn you against these so-called pleasures which are, after all, nothing but traps in which to catch your hard earnings.

A GREAT SCANDAL, AND WHAT CAUSED IT.

Now, I would not be willing to leave this subject with you until I have appended at least one other present-day cause for moral and social degradation. It is the reckless demands of modern society. Few men can afford it, and yet many are trying. A young man

said to me recently at my boarding-house: "Very few young men can afford today to associate with young ladies; the demands are too great." This is a sad commentary upon our civilization, and yet true. Girls are largely to blame for this, too. They are never so well pleased as when they can get a fellow who is fool enough to dude around and waste his money on them. Some time ago I picked up a paper and saw this account, which I give just as I read it. It shows the end of such a life. God help you to learn the lesson:

"Atlanta, Ga., January 12.—Lewis Redwine was sentenced today by Judge Pardee to six years in the penitentiary. When the court opened, Col. Nat. Hammond made a plea for a light sentence. Captain Jackson, on behalf of the government, asked for justice, declaring that the wrecking of the Gate City Bank had been followed by widespread distress. Captain Jackson referred dramatically to the suicide of his own son, as one of the circumstances connected with the case.

"Judge Pardee, in passing sentence on Redwine, said: 'I have considered this man was a very dangerous man and that he ought to be sent up for the longest period that I could name. The dexterity which he showed in covering up his tracks, the ingenious schemes resorted to, are such that a man with a badly-balanced mind would not have thought of. Considering all this, my tendency would be to impose a heavy sentence on this defendant. But there is the other

side. Here is a young man employed in this banking house, goes into it as a boy, stays there a number of years, is promoted rapidly, and he is finally given a high position and placed in charge of all the cash of the bank. He is paid a salary of $1500.

" 'At the same time, he is meeting the demands of Atlanta society. He has not only to support himself on that salary, but must support the demands of Atlanta society. He finds in the course of his business that this money is treated as merchandise, that it is treated as a bagatelle. He finds other young men in other banks who are meeting demands of Atlanta society, and who loan him $5000 and $10,000 on his check, and he naturally yields to temptation, and when he has yielded he naturally covers it up.

" 'I am inclined to think that is the view I ought to take of it; at the same time I don't think I should give this man the minimum sentence of law.'

"The court then explained the indictments for the embezzlement of $15,000; $4000 were covered by the indictment for embezzling $103,178, and that he was satisfied that there was but one shortage.

" 'Under the circumstances, I deem it my duty to sentence the defendant on each indictment. Let the defendant stand up,' said the court.

"Redwine stood up, and, supporting himself against the back of a chair, gazed steadily into the eyes of the judge, who was pronouncing the words that would legally deprive him of his liberty. 'The sentence of

the court is that you shall serve six years in the Columbus, Ohio, penitentiary. That sentence is imposed in each one of the three indictments, the sentence of each to be served concurrently with the other.' "

Thus went out a bright light. A young man is ruined, and who are the mourners?

THE YOUNG MAN THINKING;

OR,

THE HOPEFUL SIGN.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?"—Luke xv: 17.

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG MAN THINKING;

OR,

THE HOPEFUL SIGN.

In our past three talks we have been trying to show the causes which operated in bringing our young man to ruin. Tonight we take an entirely different and a more hopeful view of him. He has at last, after a good deal of lost time and wasted opportunity, with a wasted fortune and shattered constitution, come to himself.

HE IS THINKING.

Thinking of the past. The day, perhaps, when he left home. Thinking of his father's advice and his mother's tears. Of his eventful journey in this strange country. Thinking of his friends. How considerate they once were? How they had led him into sin and ruin, obtained what he had and are now gone. Thinking of the present, with its loathsome surroundings. Of the future; what he should do with himself. Thinking! meditating! O, how sad! And yet there is great comfort to be obtained as we look upon him in this condition. It is always encouraging to find a young man thinking. Well might the poet sing:

"In solitude I often come,
And find my sweetest joys."

O, if he had stopped sooner and thought, things would certainly have been different. He would never have gone so far; no, no, he would have seen the end. But this he would not do. Now, as he sees himself he would give the world to retrace his steps, but it is too late. His time has been lost. His money is all gone. His character is ruined, and the world has turned its back upon him. A sad, sad picture.

But, my friends, it is but the experience of many here tonight doubtless. I remember talking to a criminal once who pointed out to me, in his Bible, "The wages of sin is death." "O," said he, "I wish I could have understood this a year ago as I understand it today." He had not thought about it. O, the need of thinkers! Men who will stop business and pleasure and think.

The fact is the great need of this age is more men who do their own thinking.

Nothing is accomplished without it. We flash our eyes today up into the starry heavens, calculate distances and dimensions of those sparkling bodies. But we must remember that it has taken thought to accomplish all this. We have harnessed the lightning and chained it to the earth. But it has taken thought. We have penetrated the bowels of the earth and brought therefrom its hidden treasures. But this, too, has taken thought. Without it the world is chaos and ruin. With it the world is one vast ever-blooming

flower garden, yielding its sweet perfume to the patient toiler. If we go back in the history of arts and inventions we shall see an Englishman seated under a tall oak. He spies a spider spinning his web from tree to tree. He goes home and shuts himself up in his room, where he remains for days thinking. And when he comes forth he astonishes the world with a plan for a suspension bridge with which he could bridge hitherto bridgeless chasms. You say he was a genius. No, he was a thinker. After all, genius is the power to think.

May we not, then, well afford in this talk to consider the proposition "the greatest need of the age is men who think."

MAN VS. A MACHINE.

First.—Men who think concerning themselves. It is one thing to be an ape and another to be a man. The ape acts because he sees a man act. The man acts, or should act, because he chooses to act. But alas! there are many human apes in the world. Men who act just because somebody else acts. Go into any calling of life; how few people act upon their judgment of a thing? How few men really do any thinking. We are too content to live the machine life. I went in a shoe factory once and found one machine turning out more shoes in a day than one hundred men could turn out in the same time. But after all, though a machine can and does turn out a hundred times more shoes, hats or caps than a man, still the lowest down

criminal who peeps from behind prison bars or is chained to the floor of the lowest room in the lowest dungeon of earth is worth all the machinery of the world, because he is endowed with the faculty of thought. Beecher said one day he stood and watched a Hoe's printing press, with the latest improvements, taking the paper, wetting it and printing it on both sides, and with nimble fingers drawing it this way and that way and turning it over and folding it and throwing it into a box, five or ten thousand an hour ready for the mail. He says it was hard to realize that somehow the thing did not think. He says further the first time he ever saw the looms in a great factory at work that they were so life-like that he remarked to a friend, "that thing ought to vote." And by the way, it was about just as well qualified to perform this sacred rite as many who go year after year to our ballot-boxes, and with all eyes closed save the ever-open eye of prejudice, and deposit their ballots, and yet we boast of our freedom at the ballot-box. It's the freedom of a slave.

Man is not a machine. The machine never changes. It beats along in an old beaten path performing its function according to the will of its operator. Man thinks, or is at least able to think, to plan for himself according to the exigencies of the case. But alas, how many of our young men today are content with merely being human machines. They beat along in the old paths, not thinking or caring whither they are going or what will be their end.

THE BOOK TO STUDY.

But what shall we, as young men, consider? What book shall we study? I answer there is no greater book than the book of self. Do not study the external part. O, there is ample study along this line. Open its lids. Go down into its secret parts. See its composition. I saw a Bible being prepared for the World's Fair that cost $1000, but when the lids were opened it was nothing more than any other Bible. All the extra work was on the outside. So it is not the outside of self you are so much concerned about. That may for the time enhance your value, but the real value of yourself is to be realized only from within.

THE POWER OF HABIT.

Study to see your real condition; your strong points; your weak points; your habits. O, the power of habit. If you could only be fired with the power of early habits, what a blessing. A story is told in the life of General Sheridan that a battle occurred near the canal where a large number of his old worn-out horses were confined. During the heavy firing they grew warlike, formed in squadrons and charged upon a number of mules, two of whom they killed, when the rest fled. They next charged upon and overthrew a high rail fence, and did not cease their wild demonstrations until the firing had entirely ceased. If, now,

my young friends, habit is so powerful with the brute, may it not likewise be true of man. Say what we will, we are largely creatures of habit. I heard of a man who was very absent-minded. He formed the habit of relying upon his note-book for everything he did. Once he was stopping at a strange hotel. He was afraid he would not find his clothes next morning, so he wrote down in his note-book, "shoes under the bed, coat and vest in the wardrobe, pants on the chair, hat on the rack, collar, cuffs and tie on the washstand," and then, lest he might forget his own whereabouts, he wrote, "and Dinkelspeil in bed." Next morning the sound of the gong waked him up. He proceeded to dress. Taking his book he said, "pants on the chair." He then put on his pants. "Collar, cuffs and tie on washstand." He put them on. "Coat and vest in wardrobe." He put them on. "Shoes under the bed." He put them on. Now he is about ready, and lest he might have forgotten something, he took his book and read, "Dinkelspeil in bed." He went to the bed and began his search. But lo! he was gone. "Where upon the face of the earth is old 'Dink' anyway," he said. After a good deal of trouble, however, the porter succeeded in convincing him that he was not lost.

Young man, look to your habits. It is all right if you are forming good habits. But O, it will be awful if they are bad. Stop, then, and think on these things.

MEN AND THINGS.

Second.—We want men today who will think concerning men and things. We want to know our relationship to others. We want to know their strong points and their weaknesses. But above all give independent thought to things and circumstances around you. This is needful in order that you may know where to place yourself wisely. As we said awhile ago, there is too much taking things for granted today. Our actions are too largely determined by prejudice. We make up our minds aforehand. It was so when our Saviour was here. They asked then if any good thing could come out of Nazareth. This is what corrupts our politics and ruins our government. I knew a young man just about the right age to begin loving the girls and to love hard. He lived next door to a revenue officer. It was in the days of republican rule. The revenue officer had a pretty little blue-eyed girl, and the young man fell in love with her. He would steal away occasionally and chat with the girl. One day his father saw him over there and called him home. "Son, said the angry, disgraced father," "if I ever catch you over there again I'll give you a whaling." "Why father?" said the scared lad. "Why don't you know that girl's daddy is an old whiskey noser—an old revenue officer?" Well yes, father, but what of that?" "Why I feel disgraced; don't you let me ever catch you there again." The boy was likewise ashamed, and

did not go any more, at least for a while. A year or two brought a change. Mr. Cleveland was President. One day the boy heard his father talking and saw a great petition. What do you think it was. Why he was ransacking creation to get that same old "noser's" job. "Ah, ha," said the lad, "I see a thing is right when a fellow is in and wrong when a fellow is out; yes, yes; I see, I see." What the world wants today, dear friends, is men who will think about such things and decide according to the real merits of a thing, and not by blind prejudice. How our whole life, political and social, would be changed if only this were true.

MY IMPRESSIONS OF GENERAL GRANT.

I remember when I was a boy it was thought at one time that General Grant, with a party of Northern men, would visit Raleigh. I shall never forget my feelings then. I first thought it would be death to Raleigh and everybody there. What! General Grant coming to Raleigh! Who could have been so foolish as to have consented for him to come there with a gang of Yankees? But today, as I study for myself the history of great men, I accord to General Grant a place among the greatest men of his time, and were he living today I would feel honored for life to have him not only visit my city, but my home. I say this in spite of the fact that I am as true a Southerner as walks the face of the earth.

A ROUND MAN.

Let me again, young man, call you to independent thought. The world may call you cranky or three-cornered. But let them call. Remember once and forever, that a "round man" is not and cannot be a man. I have seen a game of pool, but glad I've never played. You know they have a large table, and at each corner they have some little pouches adjusted to round holes; these holes exactly fit a perfectly round ball. The object in the game is in some way, by tapping the ball with a cue—a long stick—get these balls to roll across the table until they fall into one of these holes; and when they are all in that's game. I've thought this wonderfully illustrates the nature of a "round man." You hear men talk today, "he's a round man." You may set it down that they mean that he's a fellow for whom they can scratch a hole, and then, with the cue of their own conception they can, by tapping him, make him fit it. We don't want a round man. A man ought to be enough cranky and cornered to fit only such holes as he may elect to fill, according to his best judgments.

THE HIGHEST MEDITATION.

Third.—We want men, above everything else, who will think concerning God and their relationship to Him. It is well enought to be fitted for life. Be wise in all of your actions pertaining to the things of life.

But whatever you do, don't fail to think of God. O, that I could get you young men to come with me while we talk of God and Jesus Christ. O, that you could see Him—the crucified one; that you could get a glimpse into Gethsemane's garden and there behold the agonizing Christ as he wrestles with the load of the sin of earth's unnumbered millions. O, that you could see Him on the cross as your substitute. A finished salvation through a simple acceptance of His offering. Great God, breathe upon these young men as they sit in breathless silence and think upon Jesus. Come to yourself, and you have achieved a mighty victory. Come feeling with the poet—

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

"See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

"Were all the realms of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

THE YOUNG MAN RETURNING;

OR,

RESOLUTION IN ACTION.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."—Luke xv: 18, 19.

CHAPTER VI.

THE YOUNG MAN RETURNING;

OR,

RESOLUTION IN ACTION.

It was still in the gutter that we left our young man in our last talk. But a great change had taken place in him. He had come to himself. He was thinking. We took great comfort from this fact, believing it to be a cause for rejoicing to find any young man engaged in serious thought. Oh, that more men would think! Since my last talk on this subject, a young man with early advantages equal to the best was made to pay the penalty of an awful crime upon the gallows. His confession was a great sermon. "Young men," said he, "early in life I formed the habit of drink. I was urged by friends and loved ones to stop, but I was hard-headed and would not. Step by step I went deeper and deeper in sin. I became desperate. Cared not for God or man. The crime for which I am to die was committed by me. I am not ready to die. I am now breaking the heart of a good mother. Don't charge her with blame. She did her part. But, oh, me! put the blame upon my own shoulders. I did not think it would lead to this."

Poor boy! he needed to stop and think. How many

a scandal would be prevented, if we could only get men and women to think!

But the prodigal didn't stop with thinking. Thinking would do no good in itself. So often it is true of us, that we stop with the mere making of a resolution. I expect if all the good resolutions of this audience were put into one book they would make a volume as big as a pictorial history of the world. Luther Benson said he resolved in the presence of witnesses thirty times in one month to quit whiskey, and each time broke over. How many times we have resolved to no effect! But the prodigal did not stop with "resoluting." He arose and went to his father. He put his good resolution into action. And it is this thought specially that I want to impress upon your minds coming out of our analysis of the basis of success.

EXECUTION VS. THEORY.

Success in any department of life is not only dependent upon good resolutions, but right action. That is to say, it is just as essential to execute wisely as to plan wisely.

First.—In Business.—Alexander the Great, when asked the secret of his successs in military life, said: "In not delaying when I decided." Cæsar said to his men once: "To fail to act is to die." A great French writer says: "No man thinks gloriously who fails to act gloriously." The Apostle says: "Faith without works is dead."

What does this mean? Why, it means only to say that however high and noble our thoughts may be, still unless they find expression in the manner of our living they are of no avail.

Let us illustrate this necessity by looking at the history of some great men and movements.

Solomon De Cause, a Norman, first discovered the power of steam to move a vessel. His mind was so full of the scheme that he was judged crazy, and died in prison. While Watts came upon the scene and applied De Cause's theory and reaped the glory.

Draper, more than fifty years ago, decided that it was possible to tap the surrounding membrane of the heart and relieve that dreaded disease known as heart dropsy; but it remained for another surgeon of decidedly less ability in many respects to execute this theory and reap the reward.

The theorist only can never be a success. A story is told of Sir Thomas More, who was wild on the subject of psychology. One day, his intimate friend, Erasmus, called to see him. It was a very hot summer day. Sir Thomas argued with Erasmus, that as you believe a thing, so it will be. Finally Erasmus must leave. And going away, he went to Sir Thomas's stable, saddled his riding pony, leaving his cane by the trough, with this note:

"Remember, sir, you told me,
Believe and 'twill be;
Believe a thing's a body,
And a body you'll see.

"So should you tire walking
This hot summer tide,
Believe this staff is Dobbin
And straightway you'll ride."

When Sir Thomas went out that evening and found this note, and his horse gone, he studied for a moment, and said "any theory is true, provided—," and he never finished the proviso. It is action that makes success. Don't forget that.

HOW TO DRAW A CROWD.

A man came to Sam Jones, once, asking how he could draw a crowd to hear him preach. Mr. Jones asked him if he would follow his advice, and the preacher said if he could. "Well," said Jones, "you can." "Then I will," said the preacher, brightening up. "Well, now," said the Rev. Sam, "next Sunday, when you go to your "pintment" don't go a-dragging your old self up in the pulpit like you were a hundred years old. But go a 'hoppin'' up like you were 'a goin'' to do something. Then the first thing you do, pull your long hair down over your eyes, and pop your fists, and say boo! Then if nobody moves, repeat it. And still if nobody moves, jump down and pitch somebody out the window. Then get back on your pulpit, and as the last man goes out of the house say boo! Now, then, go straight home. Next Sunday come back; and listen, brother, there will be 3000 people

there. What for? Why, they have come to see and hear a man who's done something." I don't know whether this advice was ever taken or not. I rather doubt it, for I never heard of any funeral in those parts. But there is a point there. It is a lesson of action. I am not surprised at some congregations dying. Some preachers are so afraid of a sensation, they die with the rust.

Many a business man has failed, because he did not have the power to execute. That is why we have so many financial graveyards around boomed towns and cities today. Men were theorists and not practical.

CHARACTER BUILDING.

Second.—True also in character building. The most important subject that can engage the attention of any young man is the building of his character. It has been said, "He builds a great thing who builds pyramids; but he builds a greater thing who builds a character." It is a great thing for a man to paint fine pictures and carve noble statues, but Michael Angelo's frescoings in the great Sistine Temple are not to be compared to the wondrous frescoing that is possible to be done inside the walls of the human heart. Everything depends upon your characters. You cannot afford to fail in the formatiyn of a character. And it is here, as in business, good intentions amount to nothing unless we have right action.

THINK LIKE A SAINT, ACT LIKE A DEVIL.

We often hear such expressions as, "It makes little difference what you do so you believe right." This is bosh. The idea! Think like a saint and act like a devil! Pilate believed right about Christ. He said he found no fault in Him; but we condemn Pilate because he didn't have the wisdom or the manhood to act upon his convictions. Good thoughts and right conduct must go hand in hand in the formation of a good character.

Take up your bad habits, young men. How many times you have said, "Shame be upon me; I'll quit;" and yet you go right on in the same thing.

BEATING A TRAIN.

I have heard of a young man out West who one day bet some other young men that he could manage a freight train in a very novel way. Taking his handkerchief out of his pocket, he jumped upon the track, and as the train came around the bend he waved his handkerchief and shouted stop! The engineer, seeing him, reversed his engine, blew for breaks, and came to a standstill. Meanwhile the young chap ran off in the woods without saying a word. The next day his companions bet him again that he could not succeed. The bet was accepted. The time came. The train was coming. He jumped on the track and re-

peated the performance of the first day with the same success. So again they bet him that it could not be done, and again the challenge was accepted. This time an old man came up, and said: "Young man, you had better stop playing the fool." "Well," said the boy, "I am going to stop after this time." So he went on. He did as before. The engineer had gotten tired of his folly, and instead of reversing his engine, seemed to pull wider open the throttle. On came the train, and he was pitched twenty feet down an embankment. When they gathered around him to see him die, he said, in a low, sad tone, "I'm going to quit after this." Oh, how true to many of us—"am going to quit tomorrow!"

Sometime ago in a neighboring city a great bank scandal was discovered and a prominent family brought to shame. That man knew he was wrong, and, as he said, had intended for ten years to replace that money before it was found out; but he failed to do it.

Young men, in your character-forming, which is one of the most important considerations of life, I call you now to right action. Start about it now. The longer you wait the harder to come back.

THE CROWNING ACT.

Third.—This is true in religion. There is no one present tonight who will not agree with me in saying that the crowning act in the drama of life is the return

to God from a life of sin and unbelief. Even a character ever so good, which is built upon any other foundation than this, will fail in the end. Jesus is a rock upon which, if a man build, he will stand. To such

HE IS THEIR DEFENDER.

The man who builds upon Christ has a defender. He need not fear though the world turn its back upon him. I love to think of such blessed assurances as Isa. 41: 10: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Yes, there is no occasion for fear if Jesus is our strength. I am afraid that this is the reason why we have so many cowards today in the Lord's work; they do not rest upon Christ. Young man, have you trouble in keeping out of sin? Do those old habits continue to haunt you? Are you afraid you can't hold out should you take the "new" step? Rest your hopes upon Jesus. He is not only able, but willing. Listen at the experience of an old veteran, the Apostle Paul: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Do you want any better testimony than this? Arise, then, tonight. Come home to your Father. Lay your sins at His feet.

"From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.

"There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads,—
A place of all on earth most sweet;
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat.

"There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy-seat.

"There, there on eagle wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more,
And heaven comes down our souls to greet,
And glory crowns the mercy-seat."

But not only does Christ as your foundation furnish you strength for service, but He enables you to be of the highest service to others. And I am tempted just here to give an account of the experience of a young lady, as published in the Ladies' Home Journal a short time ago. It conveys to my mind so completely the mission of life and the importance of right action even in little things.

"Ruth, I have tickets for the concert of the Bell-ringers on Wednesday night; can you go?" Alice said to a friend, as she stopped at her gate.

"It is prayer-meeting night."

"I know; but they sail for Europe Friday night, and this is their last concert."

"But I never stay from prayer-meetings for anything."

"But this is a sacred concert—and only once. We can worship just as well there."

So, reluctantly, against her convictions, Ruth consented.

That night the girl dreamed that an angel in shining raiment stood beside her, and asked, gently, "Where are you going tomorrow night?"

And she answered: "I thought I would go to the concert."

Then the angel said, sadly, "Have you so little appreciation of the value of a single soul?"

Vividly the vision came back to Ruth the next morning, as she lay, saying softly to herself, wondering what it could mean, "So little appreciation of the value of a single soul."

She decided that she must take back her promise to the concert, and go to the prayer-meeting. Ruth sat in the house of prayer with a strange joy in her soul, singing "Plenteous Grace."

As the music ceased, the girl sprang impulsely to her feet.

"I meant to hear the Bell-wringers tonight," she said, "but I decided I would rather go to prayer-meeting, and I am happier here than I would have been at the concert, and I am sure no music could be sweeter than the hymn we have just sung."

As the hour for closing drew near, the pastor rose and invited anyone who would give themselves to Christ to come forward. As he waited in silence, a lady in mourning walked slowly up the aisle, and, kneeling, was shown the way to salvation.

When the service was ended, a friend came to Ruth and said, "The lady who went forward wishes to be introduced to you."

Much astonished, the girl went to receive the introduction to Mrs. Walters. "I wanted to tell you," the lady said, "that I owe the fact of my being a Christian tonight to your testimony. I have not been inside of a church for ten years. I came here to please a friend, and when you said you would give up a concert for a prayer-meeting, and that no music could be sweeter to you than the hymn, 'Jesus, Lover of my Soul,' I thought to myself, 'There must be something in religion, and I am going to have it.' So I wish to thank you that it is because of your testimony I shall go home tonight a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Ruth held out her hand and pressed gratefully that of her new friend. She knew now the meaning of the angel's message. She could not tell Mrs. Walters how nearly she had come to proving recreant to her trust, nor of the dream that had influenced her in the true direction, so she answered, simply, "I thank you for telling me this. I shall never forget it." Yet she little guessed what cause she would always have to remember it.

Ruth's home was close beside a railroad track. About midnight she was awakened by a horrible crashing sound. Looking through the window, she could see where the midnight express and the 11.30 freight had collided. The frantic cries of the frightened and the piercing shrieks of the wounded made her shudder. But she bravely put away all thoughts of self, and, calling her father, was soon ready to go with him to the rescue. And the first face that looked into her's as she stood beside the burning train was that of Mrs. Walters.

Pale and peaceful it was, though showing how intensely she suffered. She was extricated and borne to Ruth's home. The power of speech was almost gone. She rallied a little as they laid her on Ruth's couch. Taking her hand and pressing it to her lips, she whispered feebly:

"Child, I'm going—it was my last chance—what if you had not spoken—what if I had not taken it?"

And kneeling there beside the dead, the hot tears raining down her face, Ruth promised the Father always to do her duty, always to give her testimony, always to appreciate the value of a single soul.

Oh, young men, this is your highest duty, as well as your most gracious privilege. I insist that you shall look at it honestly and faithfully. Surely every man wants success. Roman history tells of an officer who served forty years in service of his country; fought 120 successful battles; won fourteen civic crowns; but when

he came to die, he directed that they should be destroyed. Said he, "I've lived for the wrong cause."

Boys, is there a conviction in your soul tonight that you ought to come home? Don't sit and think longer, but up and make the journey. Start home tonight.

AT HOME AT LAST;

OR,

A FATHER'S GRACIOUS SMILES.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."—Luke xv: 20.

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."—Luke xv: 24.

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOME AT LAST;

OR,

A FATHER'S GRACIOUS SMILES.

It is my purpose in this talk to follow our young man home, and show his gracious reception by a loving, forgiving father. We left him starting—that was more than half the battle. Getting the consent of our minds is the first step, but unless we start, the consent amounts to no purpose.

He is on his way home; it is a lonesome journey—an entirely new route. How different from the one he traveled only a short while ago—perhaps only a few years, when he went out from the old home, from loved ones and friends! That morning when he turned his eyes worldward, it was a bright day. What a grand panorama stood before him! Beautiful landscapes, towering mountain peaks, with lovely cascades wreathed in perpetual blooming flowers; broad, sweeping plains, waving in golden grain, only awaiting the harvester; laughing streams and streamlets, along whose banks were ever-fragrant flowers. How bright the prospects! How envied his start!

But things have wonderfully changed even in so short a time. Those tall peaks of hope are now reek-

ing, belching volcanoes, pouring their red-hot lava of death and ruin upon him in his every step. Those waving fields of grain are now great wildernesses of thorns and thistles, while those laughing streams and streamlets are now become great stagnant ponds, teeming with the poisonous microcosi of blasted hopes and lost opportunities. Oh, how sad! Like Milton in Sampson Agonistes, when the messenger enters in hot haste to relate the catastrophe at Goza—

> "Which way go or whither fly
> The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
> Which erst my eyes beheld and
> Still behold; for dire imaginations
> Still pursue me."

Yes, like a poor debauche, just coming out of a spell of delirium, in his semi-consciousness, the ghosts of hell continue to haunt him by flouncing into his face the scroll of a misspent and sinful past, so this young prodigal now tramped the lonesome path with a heavy heart and a smiting conscience. Nothing to eat; nothing to wear; no friends—alone he comes plodding home to his father.

Young men, this ought to be a warning. It is the fruit of sin. Oh, stop now "before the evil days come nigh."

AT HOME.

Second.—The next place we find him is at home. He is standing on the same soil upon which he once

played. Things here have changed, too, since he left. It is always true that things undergo seemingly a much more rapid change when we are away.

A VISIT TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOME.

I remember some years ago I visited my grandmother after being away for several years. I had looked forward to the trip with great pleasure. The day arrived. I started from the city of Raleigh, N. C. It was a beautiful afternoon, and I had a swift horse. But the distance was so long. It seemed as if I never would get there. Finally, I was in the neighborhood, and ventured to ask the way, for there were new houses and new roads and I was somewhat lost. Soon, however, I was there. Oh, what a change! The house was so much dilapidated. The flowers all dead. Many of the beautiful white oaks in the large grove had been cut down. What a change! What a change! But I had not realized the change to its fullest extent until I saw dear old grandma. Her form all bent, her eyes dim, her voice trembling with the use of eighty-nine years. Surely, with the poet, I realized that

> "Life is full of changes—
> Too numerous to be told;
> Today we are babies,
> Tomorrow we are old."

So we can imagine that our young man, as he stood and viewed the surroundings, saw many sad changes.

The grounds, the trees, the home, the shrubbery, all changed. It does not look like home. And, besides, father has changed. His hair is gray, partially due to his boy's misconduct. Mother may be gone, and her vacant chair, empty slippers and absent voice strike terror to his already sad heart. But with all, it is a glad day, for he is at home at last. All fears are gone. Father saw him and ran and met him. I don't know how he knew him. There might have been something in his walk which so resembled the child of a few years ago, or perhaps, while he was a great way off, he began to cry, or to sing, and the father heard him and recognized him as his darling boy.

"O, YOU RASCAL, YOU CAN'T FOOL YOUR OLD GRANDMAMMY."

There is something strange about the recognition of parents of their children. On that same trip when I went to visit my old grandmother I was convinced of this. I thought I would fool her. So, driving up to the gate, I said, "Hello!" The dogs began to bark. Again, "Hello!" said I. Just then, an old colored woman came to the door. Said I, "Does Mrs. Franks live here?" I thought I had completely changed my voice; but about that time I heard her dear old voice from within say, "Oh, you rascal, you can't fool your poor old grandmammy. Get down off that buggy!" and here she came. It didn't take me long before I was on the ground. "God bless you, Lennie, my dear

boy!" and then I hardly know what happened. It was a foretaste of what I shall again realize when I drive up to her mansion in heaven and she comes to meet me.

Oh, the father's glad heart that day when the boy came home! Boys, don't stay away from home too long. You will regret it some day. There are those there who love you; they would die for you; they are thinking about you all the time. Go home as often as you can consistent with your duties, and if you can't go as often as you would like, write to mother and father often. Cheer their dear old hearts by letting them know you still love and remember them fondly.

"IT CAME FROM WHERE MOTHER SAT."

Pardon me for giving you a little incident which was given me by my distinguished brother and friend, Dr. Wm. E. Hatcher, the successful pastor of Grace Street Church in Richmond, Va. I believe it was told him by the Rev. Dr. P. S. Hinson, of Chicago. Dr. Hinson was on his way to preach a commencement sermon at Wake Forest College, in North Carolina. At the town of Weldon, he found an old man sitting on a seat opposite him. He was a rough-looking specimen of a man. Evidently showed that he had lived a tough life. He seemed to be in great distress. "Can I be of any comfort to you, my friend?" said the Doctor. "No, no," said he, in a gruff manner. Several times he offered help, but he was refused, the old man saying, "Nobody cares for me." Dr. Hinson made his trip,

and was returning. At a little station on the way, this same old man came aboard the cars. He was more troubled than before. The Doctor spoke to him again, and this time he seemed glad of an opportunity to talk. Said he, "Mister, I'm all broken up. Oh, I'm ruined. You see, I'm now old—I'm over seventy. When I was a boy, I ran away from home. I had a good mother. At first, I felt lonesome, and often thought about her, but as time passed I ceased to think of her. I never wrote to her. She did not know where I was. Some time ago I began to think of her. I felt like I must see her, but I did not expect she was living. The thought continued to stay with me. I resolved to come from my Western home back to North Carolina to see if I could find her. I went to the neighborhood and asked for her, but nobody knew anything about the family. Finally, I found an old man who remembered her, but could not tell me where she was buried. But I remembered the old church where she always carried me. I went over and found it. But it was gone to nothing. I went in. It had a brick floor. I found the place where she always sat. There were the bricks on which her feet rested. I got down there and cried, mister—cried like a child. Oh, to have called her back! And now, friend, you see this bundle? Well, I'm carrying it home. This brick you see is worn; her feet did that. I'm going to take it home, and when I die I want my head to rest on this brick."

This was a sad story. We feel sorry for the old man as we read it. Young men, don't, I beg you, neg-

lect these dear old souls. Serve them more and more as the days go by. How tender the thought of mother when she is gone!

"They tell me of an angel's form
That watched me while I slept;
And of a soft and gentle hand
That wiped the tears I wept.

"And that same hand that held my own
When I began to walk—
The joy that sparkled in her eyes
When first I tried to talk.

"They say the mother's heart is pleased
When infant charms expand—
I wonder if she thinks of me,
In that bright happy land.

"I know she is in heaven now,
That holy place of rest,
For she was always good to me—
The good alone are blest.

"And I have got some little books,
She taught me how to spell.
The chiding or the kiss she gave,
I still remember well.

"And then she used to kneel with me,
And taught me how to pray,
And raise my little hands t'wards heaven
And tell me what to say.

"O! mother, mother, in my heart
Thy image still shall be,
And I will hope in heaven, at last,
That I may meet with thee."

A DEEPER MEANING.

Third.—But, young men, this reception has a deeper and a richer meaning than the domestic relation. It does not simply mean to be applied to prodigality, in the various walks of life, but primarily it is intended to show a sinner's wandering from God the conditions of his return, and the graciousness of our Father's reception.

1. We have in the young man himself an unbeliever. Everyone of you failing to accept the Lord Jesus is a prodigal.

2. We have in his fast life the nature of sin to lead us on and on to ruin, promising everything, and giving us nothing.

3. We have in his want the utter insufficiency of a life of sinful pleasure to satisfy.

4. In coming home and his reception, we have the nature of God to forgive.

Oh, dear, unbelieving souls, come home to your loving, heavenly Father! Why longer stay in sin? Come home now!

HOW COME?

Do you ask how come? Why, like the prodigal, "arise;" start out; turn around. Jesus stands to receive you.

Some years ago I heard a celebrated revivalist explain repentance and faith. I was standing in the

door, for I could not get a seat. All at once the preacher jumped off the platform and came down the aisle, saying, "I'm going to hell! I'm going to hell!" Said I to myself, I believe it. About that time, he wheeled on his heels and started back, saying, "I'm going to heaven! I'm going to heaven!" Then, stepping on the platform, said he, "That's what I mean by repentance and faith." A while ago you were going in unbelief and sin; you were going to hell. You turn around, look to God, start toward Him—that's repentance and faith together.

So I call you to turn around tonight; turn to God. There is salvation for everyone of you if you will only accept it.

Dr. Newman Hall relates this little story, which I give you in conclusion, praying God to bless it to your salvation:

Some years ago a tall chimney had been completed, and the scaffolding was being moved. One man remained on top to superintend the process. A rope should have been left for him to descend by. His wife was at home washing, when her little boy burst in with, "Mother, mother, they've forgotten the rope, and he's going to throw himself down!" She paused; her lips moved in agony of prayer, and she rushed forth. A crowd was looking up to the poor man, who was moving around the narrow cornice, terrified and bewildered; he seemed as if any moment he might fall or throw himself down in despair. His wife from below

cried out: "Take off your stockings, unravel the worstead!" And he did so. "Now tie the end to a bit of mortar and lower gently."

Down came the thread and a bit of mortar, swinging backwards and forwards. Lower and lower it descended, eagerly watched by many eyes; it was now within reach, and was gently seized by one of the crowd. They fastened some twine to the thread. "Now pull up." The man got hold of the twine. The rope was now fastened on. "Pull away again." He at length seized the rope and made it secure. There was a few moments of suspense, then amidst the shouts of the people he threw himself into the arms of his wife, sobbing, "Thous't saved me, Mary!" The worstead thread was not despised: it threw after it the twine, the rope, the rescue!

Ah, my friend, thou may'st be sunk very low down in sin and woe, but there is a thread of divine love that comes from the throne of heaven and touches even thee. Seize that thread. It may be small, but it is golden. Improve what you have, however little, and then more shall be given. That thin thread of love, if you will not neglect it, shall lift even you up to God and glory. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

The father put the best robe upon him, shoes upon his feet and made merry the entire household. So God, your Father, will draw you up in the robe of righteousness and make glad the City of God. Come home, young man! Come home!

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

"Agonizing in the garden,
Lo! your Maker prostrate lies;
On the bloody tree behold Him;
Hear Him cry before He dies,
'It is finished;'
Sinners, will not this suffice?

"Lo! the incarnate God, ascended,
Pleads the merit of His blood;
Venture on Him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

THE YOUNG MAN WHO STAYED AT HOME;

OR,

WHINERS AND WHINING.

"Now his elder brother was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing."—Luke xv: 25.

"But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."—Luke xv: 30.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG MAN WHO STAYED AT HOME;

OR,

WHINERS AND WHINING.

The character before us now, while clearly related to our young man by the ties of nature, is not at all like him in conduct and disposition. Really, of the two, he is to be the most pitied.

The primary intention in his case is to show us the groundlessness of the Jews who complained at the Master for receiving the Gentiles. But we are not dealing with the Jew here—there are none of them present. We are dealing with another class of whiners, however, who are as groundless in their complaints as ever the Jew was.

The question then for us to consider is, how much related are we to this young man who stayed at home?

I never did see any use in going around an issue. To me, the scriptures are full of meaning for all classes and conditions. I heard a preacher once spend an hour in bitter denunciation of Judas Iscariot. I never heard such raking as old Judas received. He moved, he swayed, he stirred his audience. I really began to feel somewhat sorry for the old sinner. But in all that sermon he never said a word about the kinsman of Judas, who was following him, only worse, in that he was be-

traying Christ and getting nothing for it. Let us, then, give this lesson tonight a chance to speak to us.

WHINERS.

He was a whiner, and we have them today in every department of life.

In Business.—It is a very easy matter today to get together a great number—a regular congregation of them. They are usually very wise. They know how to run things—run everything, from a wheelbarrow to a steam engine. They are patriots and statesmen. They can manipulate the government with ease. That is what's the matter with our country today—an over-production of statesmen; and yet if the concentrated extract of the whole politically-aspiring country was obtained, I don't believe you could find one genuine statesman. There are at least a half-million men, and some few female men, who are in every way capacitated to run the government. These are our political whiners. Everything is wrong to the fellow who is out, and right to the fellow that's in. Go out in the country, in the rural districts, or on our streets, and hang around among the bummers, and you can find material enough amply qualified to run the government, to fill every office in the United States, from squire to President—that is, if you would listen at their talk.

They are financiers, too—great financiers. They could straighten out Uncle Sam, pay off all his debts

and have enough money to give every man, woman and child enough to last them a lifetime without striking a lick—that is, to hear their talk. Silver! Silver! Gold! Gold! Sound money! Rotten money! Hard money! Soft money! Greenbacks! Bonds! Oh, hear them talk! How wise! How Solomon-like in their wisdom! And yet, as a matter of fact, these fellows, half of them, are under the homestead act, or have shammed off what they have to their wives, to keep from paying their own debts. And the majority of the other half are either tied up head and ears in boom lots or running head over heels in debt every day of their lives. But these are our politicians. They are our whiners, too. Sound finance with them is the finance which comes their way. An honest dollar with them is the dollar that brings the greatest per cent. into their own pocket, whether it's honest or not. I don't know how it is with you, but as for me I am tired hollowing myself hoarse and throwing up my hat when I hear one of these old homestead, protected, bankrupt office-seekers orate on "the great financial problems of the day." I want to hear a man talk who has managed his own money and paid his debts. When a man begins to whine around me, I try to find out how well capacitated he is to whine before I pay any attention to his whining.

SOCIAL WHINERS.

We find them in society. You know we have about as many circles now in society as we have letters in the

alphabet; this little circle and that, everyone claiming to be the representation of "the best." And every little circle is mad because every other little circle will not recognize it. Hence, there is a constant state of war in the social world. I don't know why this is, for there has always been classes in the world. And, besides, I have always been too proud to associate with anybody who didn't want to associate with me. But they will whine. If they see another getting up a little higher than they are, they go out at once on a whining expedition.

IN THE CHURCH.

This class, I am sorry to say, is not entirely wanting even in the church. They are the objectors. They seem to have been born on a cloudy day and have never seen the sun. Spring anything which has for its object the glory of God, and you at once must stop to deal with "I'll object." They are like the naturalist who went crazy studying gnats. He thought he ate gnats, drank gnats, saw gnats, felt gnats, smelt gnats and heard gnats. It was gnats, gnats, gnats. One day as a friend was taking him out driving they came in sight of a huge mountain. "See!" said the friend, "isn't that a pretty mountain?" The old fellow took out his field-glasses and looked, and then said, straining his eyes at the same time, "I see no mountain, but a great pile of gnats." So with our friend in the church. He will look over a mountain of good to find

a single gnat of objection. Then it is object, object, object.

I have never known why the Lord lets such people get into the church, unless it is to try the patience of preachers, for if there is anything a preacher does mortally dread it is the fellow who lives in the "objective case."

TREATING CORNS.

Whiners are usually very sensitive. It is very hard to come anywhere near them without creating a great deal of trouble; and yet they get awful uneasy if you don't notice their whinings. They have corns—a great many of them, and they are usually pretty hard and horny, and, as a matter of course, they are easy to get to hurting, and when they hurt they hurt bad. They expect usually that the preacher is to play the part of chiropodist—a corn-doctor. Such, however, won't do. In the first place, everybody has a contempt for a professional corn-doctor; he is regarded in the profession as a quack. Again, that is not the way to treat a corn. The only way to treat a corn is by dissecting it out by the roots. And so the only way to treat one of these corny characters is to apply the scalpel of divine truth until it cuts out the roots of the disease, for in many respects it is a disease with which these poor unfortunates are afflicted. In love, then, and Christian kindness, cut hard and cut deep, and if the cure does not result, we will have an easy conscience, and that's worth a great deal.

JEALOUSY.

Usually, too, he is very jealous of his rights. This is peculiarly his own misfortune, as it does not affect anyone so much as himself; and the only thing such an unfortunate one has to do to realize this is to continue harboring such a feeling, and it will come in the end. You have, perhaps, heard of the man who had a rival. When his rival died, he could not help rejoicing just a little. But friends built a monument over him, and then the poor old jealous soul wished he was dead. But since they might not put a monument over him, he thought the next best thing to do was to pull down the one over his rival; so he procured a spike one night and began to prize. Finally, he broke his back, and next morning there he was, with a broken back, but the monument was not hurt. So I have seen men and women with the spike of jealousy or envy prizing away at a towering monument of character, trying as best they could to destroy it. But in the end it only means their own destruction. Be careful, then, young men, in this matter; strive to do your best, and let the world do the same.

STUBBORNNESS.

Again, this class of people are usually blinded by stubbornness and what might be termed peevishness. This was one trouble with the young man who stayed at home. He was not only jealous and envious, but,

with it all, he was stubborn. It often happens that men allow their stubbornness to blind their best interests. The New York Sun some time ago printed the following little story, which will illustrate this:

One man was driving out of town with a load of bricks, and another was driving in with a load of hay. Both of them tried to get the best side of a mud hole, and the two teams came head to head and stopped.

"You, there!" shouted the first driver, in loud and angry tones.

"You, there, yourself," replied the second, equally loud.

"Going to turn out?"

"No!"

"Nor I either!"

"I'll stay here year first!"

"And I'll stay ten!"

Both men proceeded to make themselves ostentatiously comfortable and indifferent.

Such other travelers as came along took the other side of the road and passed them by. It had become a question of endurance.

At the end of an hour the hay man broke the silence.

"If ther's one thing I hate, it's a human hog."

"Then it's a wonder you haven't killed yourself before now."

Another hour passed, and this time the brick man spoke.

"I'm going to sleep; I hope you won't disturb me."

"Just what I was going to ask of you," said the other man, from his load of hay.

Both pretended to go to sleep, but towards night the hay man suddenly broke out:

"Say, you're a mighty mean man!"

"The same of you."

"Where are you going with those bricks?"

"Four miles out, to John Dayton.

"Where is your hay going?"

"To Stiner's brick-yard."

"Say, man, I'm John Dayton myself, and I've traded this hay for brick."

"Well, I'm young Stiner, and I am driving the first load out."

"What fools we are! Here, take all the road!"

"No, no; let me turn out."

"I'll turn."

"No, let me."

And in their eagerness to do the right thing, the load of hay was upset and a wheel taken off the brick wagon.

This has practically been the experience of many—perhaps some of us. Let us watch this,—such a common weakness.

THE MODERN ZIPHITES.

Finally, this class are generally great critics; they are very far-sighted; can usually read with accuracy the flaws in other men's characters, but fail absolutely in seeing their own. And more than otherwise, they will feel it their special missions to keep the community

informed about those things. They are somewhat like the Ziphites in opening up the old sores between Saul and David. They are never so happy as when they are feasting like the dogs around Lazarus, upon a dish of scabs pulled from the character of their neighbors. Oh, beware of such characters as these! They are as dangerous as a serpent. I'd be ashamed to have no higher mission in life than a sore-licker or a scab-eater. There is something better to live for than this. Let us see if we cannot cultivate the habit of telling all the good we know about a man before we tell the bad.

IN CONCLUSION.

Now, young men, in concluding this series of practical talks tonight, let me say that they have been delivered under very favorable circumstances. You have come in great numbers. I have rejoiced to talk with you and to you in this way. I want to thank you personally for your presence. Many kind expressions have come to me from you and from your parents. I trust that you have received some suggestions which will be helpful to you. And if in heaven I shall be rewarded by their fruits, as I have been here in their delivery by your presence and your expressions, I shall be amply satisfied. May the richest blessings of heaven rest upon the young men of our city and the world is the prayer of one who loves you and would help you. And as a closing thought I would leave with you Duffield's beautiful poem:

"Stand up!—stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss:
From victory unto victory
His army shall be led,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

"Stand up!—stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;—
Ye dare not trust your own:
Put on the gospel armor,
And, watching unto prayer,
Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.

"Stand up!—stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song:
To him that overcometh,
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally."

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